

Remarks

Reconsideration and reversal of the rejections expressed in the Office Action of December 29, 2005 are respectfully contended in view of the following remarks and the application as amended. The present invention relates to a surface treatment process, comprising: providing a hydrophilic surface; polishing said surface with a slurry that comprises a suspension of abrasive particles in deionized water and TMAH, whereby said surface is rendered hydrophobic; and thereby causing all of said abrasive particles to be removed when said surface is rinsed in deionized water.

Claims 17, 19, 21, 22, 24 and 26 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Andreas in view of Greiger et al., U.S. Patent No. 6,468,951. The Office Action states, inter alia, that it would have been obvious to modify the post-planarization method of Andreas by alternately using TBAH or TMAH, as taught by Greiger.

Andreas, U.S. Patent No. 6,358,325, relates to an integrated cleaner with scrubber for cleaning and scrubbing semiconductor substrates that includes a housing that contains both a cleaning module and a scrubbing module. The cleaning module is capable of performing a wet-cleaning process on a batch of the semiconductor substrates. Greiger, U.S. Patent No. 6,468,951, relates to a composition for cleaning a semiconductor device wherein the composition is comprised of a combination of solvent, hydrofluoric acid (HF) and tetraalkylammonium hydroxide (TAAH).

Note that there is no teaching or suggestion in either reference of the polishing of a copper hydrophilic surface, as disclosed and claimed in the instant application. In order to enhance the prosecution of the present application, the independent claims have been clarified to include this aspect. Therefore, as the presently claimed invention is neither taught nor suggested by the references, either alone or in combination, prima facie obviousness is not established.

For all of the above reasons, it is respectfully contended that the solicited claims define patentable subject matter. Reconsideration and reversal of the rejections expressed in the Office

Action of December 29, 2005 are respectfully submitted. The Examiner is invited to call the undersigned if any questions arise during the course of reconsideration of this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

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Richard A. Paikoff

Richard A. Paikoff

Reg. No. 34,892

Duane Morris LLP

30 South 17th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19103-4196

tel. 215-979-1853

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